



## Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes

### Background and Context

Education has always been an integral part of the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next for First Nations, Métis and Inuit families and communities. As formal education became established, the knowledge and cultures of Indigenous peoples was often marginalized. Historically, the right to education was recognized by Indigenous<sup>1</sup> leaders and the Government of Canada. The treaties signed by First Nations leaders promised an equitable system of education to provide the skills to participate fully in the economy as well as continuity for Indigenous knowledge, languages, cultures and traditions.

The 1996 Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples recognized education as a treaty right:

*“The government of Canada recognize and fulfill its obligations to treaty nations by supporting a full range of education services including post-secondary education, for members of treaty nations where a promise of education appears in treaty texts, related documents or oral histories of the parties involved.”<sup>2</sup>*

The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples highlighted the need for the federal government to support lifelong learning and identified the barriers Indigenous learners face – and these still ring true today:

- *“Too few programs are accessible in or near their often remote communities.*
- *Courses lack relevance to their lives and circumstances.*
- *Entry requirements are insensitive to their backgrounds and cultures.*
- *Programs offer few of the personal supports they need, especially child care for adult women students.”<sup>3</sup>*

Since its creation in 1972, Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) has made a strategic priority of Indigenous peoples' access to post-secondary education, learner success, inclusion and community development. The Association's submission to the Royal Commission emphasized the need for colleges and institutes to work in close partnership with Indigenous communities. In recognition of what has long been known about the recovery of cultural self-esteem and confidence, this submission also

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this Protocol, the term “Indigenous” includes First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples, the three distinct Indigenous peoples of Canada.”

<sup>2</sup> Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996b, vol. 3, pg. 689.

<sup>3</sup> Highlights from the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996. pg. 47.

highlighted the value of Indigenous people teaching Indigenous people and the importance of increasing the understanding and knowledge about Indigenous cultures by non-Indigenous Canadians.

CICan has developed the *Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes* to support our members' commitment to improving and better serving Indigenous education. This will be achieved by highlighting college and institute exemplary practices and underscoring the importance of structures required to address Indigenous peoples' learning needs and support self-determination and socio-economic development of Indigenous communities. The spirit of the Protocol is to support colleges' and institutes' commitment to Indigenous education and provide a vision of how they can strive to improve and better serve Indigenous peoples.

Colleges and institutes are organized and structured differently to meet the needs of Indigenous learners and communities. Although the Protocol is a national document, it needs to acknowledge and be sensitive to local community needs. For this reason, members of CICan will be invited to share the protocol with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities with which they work in partnership. An institutional partnerships signature page has been provided to assist colleges' and institutes' efforts to share the Protocol with Indigenous community partners.

The Indigenous Education Protocol was developed by the Indigenous Education Committee, comprising college and institute representatives from across the provinces and territories, as well as through consultations held at the Serving Indigenous Learners and Communities Symposium in December 2013, and the CICan annual conferences in 2013 and 2014.

CICan has addressed Indigenous post-secondary education access through submissions to Parliamentary and Senate Committees and has showcased college / institute exemplary practices in serving Indigenous learners and communities through publications, national symposia and conferences. The Association also collaborates with national Indigenous organizations and the Indigenous Education Protocol will be instrumental in supporting joint positions to advocate to the federal government on the importance of increasing access to post-secondary education for Indigenous peoples.



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## Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes

The signatory institutions to this protocol recognize and affirm their responsibility and obligation to Indigenous education.

Colleges and institutes respect and recognize that Indigenous people include First Nation, Métis and Inuit people, having distinct cultures, languages, histories and contemporary perspectives.

Indigenous education emanates from the intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Indigenous education will strengthen colleges' and institutes' contribution to improving the lives of learners and communities.

The signatory institution agrees to:

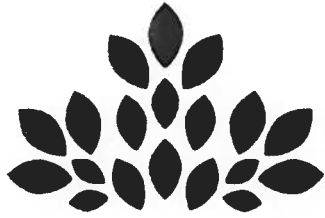
1. *Commit to making Indigenous education a priority.*
2. *Ensure governance structures recognize and respect Indigenous peoples.*
3. *Implement intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples through curriculum and learning approaches relevant to learners and communities.*
4. *Support students and employees to increase understanding and reciprocity among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.*
5. *Commit to increasing the number of Indigenous employees with ongoing appointments, throughout the institution, including Indigenous senior administrators.*
6. *Establish Indigenous-centred holistic services and learning environments for learner success.*
7. *Build relationships and be accountable to Indigenous communities in support of self-determination through education, training and applied research.*

Signatories endorse the intent of these principles and are committed to developing policies, procedures and practices within their institutions.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_



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## Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes

### Institutional Partnerships Signatures

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_



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## **Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes**

### **Approaches and Exemplary Practices to Guide Implementation**

This document identifies approaches and exemplary practices related to the seven principles in the *Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes*. These approaches and practices are provided as examples to guide colleges and institutes working towards applying the principles to their institutional reality and the needs of the communities and regions they serve. This is considered a living document that will be updated annually as additional approaches and exemplary practices are identified in consultation with members of Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan). Members are invited to send approaches and exemplary practices to update this document to: Anna Toneguzzo, Manager Government Relations and Policy Research, at [atoneguzzo@collegesinstitutes.ca](mailto:atoneguzzo@collegesinstitutes.ca).

#### **1. *Commit to making Indigenous education a priority.***

- Embed the mandate to serve Indigenous learners and communities in colleges' and institutes' strategic plans to ensure Indigenous learner needs are considered in institutional planning and decision-making.

#### **2. *Ensure governance structures recognize and respect Indigenous peoples.***

- Ensure Indigenous representation on college and institute Boards of Governors, Program Advisory Committees, Student Associations through delegated seats for First Nation, Métis and Inuit leaders, and allow for parallel Indigenous Advisory Councils and Elder/Métis Senator Councils.

#### **3. *Implement intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples through curriculum and learning approaches relevant to learners and communities.***

##### **Transition and upgrading programs:**

- Build linkages and partnerships between K-12 and post-secondary education systems, including the availability of dual-credit options between colleges/institutes and high schools;
- Integrate Indigenous-focused upgrading programs or modules into standard provincial upgrading programs;

- Offer flexibility in the delivery of transition programs to allow adult learners to pause and restart programs as required due to family, community or work obligations; and
- Use culturally relevant assessment tools, which may differ for First Nation, Métis and Inuit learners.

**College and institute curriculum:**

- Capture and reflect history, including oral history, as understood by Indigenous peoples, across curriculum;
- Promote and support the preservation of Indigenous languages;
- Embed intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples;
- Combine educational pedagogy and epistemology infused with Elder/Métis Senator knowledge;
- Confront the legacy of residential schools, recognizing the challenge of institutional settings and supporting healing and reconciliation; and
- Recognize that Indigenous knowledge can benefit all learners (e.g. environment, justice) and have processes for two-way sharing (e.g. both scientific and traditional ways).

**Learning Approaches:**

- Offer flexibility in program and course delivery and allow for stop-out and start-up options;
- Develop and deliver community-based education and training programs that are aligned with the economic, social development and labour market needs of Indigenous communities, recognizing that First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples are distinct and that their communities will differ in terms of the education programs required;
- Legitimize traditional knowledge by giving post-secondary credits for this knowledge, as for other skills and areas of expertise.

**4. *Support students and employees to increase understanding and reciprocity among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.***

- Acknowledge the territory and land on which colleges and institutes are located and serve and integrate the use of Indigenous language at events, ceremonies and meetings.
- Include traditional ways of doing and being in the processes associated with institutional functioning (e.g. Elder/Métis Senator opening words/prayers, feasts, drum dancing, healing circles / sharing circles, storytelling).
- Create an environment where everyone has responsibility for Indigenous issues by adopting a cross-accountability rather than a silo structure.
- Offer staff and faculty training on Indigenous history, inter-cultural training for all (faculty, administration, support staff, facilities), including experiential, hands-on learning activities, and land and place-based learning.

**5. Commit to increasing the number of Indigenous employees with ongoing appointments throughout the institution, including Indigenous senior administrators.**

- Improve frontline services for Indigenous students by allocating resources to ensure regular access to services from Elders/Métis Senators from the community or in residence.
- Establish targets for hiring First Nation, Métis and Inuit employees at colleges and institutes, at all levels.
- Ensure institutional hiring and human resource development strategies identify goals and approaches for increasing the number of Indigenous staff and faculty.

**6. Establish Indigenous-centred holistic services and learning environments for learner success.**

- Initiate recruitment with Indigenous students earlier than grades 7 to 10 to expose youth to college/institute programs and related career opportunities, and link them to prerequisites they need in high school.
- Offer culturally relevant assessment services :
  - prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) services to recognize traditional knowledge base and life experience of learners;
  - English/French and math skills assessments must recognize the English or French gap for Indigenous language speakers, and allow more time to complete to support success.
- Change the symbolism that exists throughout the institution so that it is more respectful and inclusive of Indigenous ways and increases visibility of Indigenous culture through gathering spaces, gardens, signage, art work and ceremonies.
- Move from a safe space to a safe campus approach by ensuring that culture, language and Elder/Métis Senator involvement is not compartmentalized and is visible and viable across all aspects of the institution and students' experiences.
- Offer Indigenous-centred support services to address the needs of learners holistically and guided by the wisdom and leadership of Elders/Métis Senators, including:
  - Elder/Métis Senator services from the community or in residence;
  - housing, childcare and transportation;
  - tutoring and learning supports;
  - health care and mental health counselling;
  - mentorships and role models from alumni and graduating students;
  - career and employment counselling; and
  - activities structured around family.

- Ensure support services are multi-pronged to meet the diverse needs of Indigenous people: urban, rural, Status, Non-Status, First Nation, Métis and Inuit.
- Integrate systems and provisions to eliminate financial barriers for Indigenous students including:
  - sponsored seats;
  - funds for participation in upgrading programs;
  - financial assistance, including bursaries and scholarships;
  - partnership funding to host visits, meetings and events;
  - base funding allocation by the institution to minimize dependency on soft funding;
  - waive tuition for children in care;
  - differentiated funding models within institutions to account for smaller enrolment.

**7. *Build relationships and be accountable to Indigenous communities in support of self-determination through education, training and applied research.***

- Formalize college and institute partnerships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, Indigenous institutes of higher learning and Indigenous organizations such as Friendship Centres and Métis Community Councils, recognizing the equal partnership status.
- Identify community needs in an open and genuine consultation approach including :
  - how the community wants to work with the college/institute;
  - the content of the education and training programs; and
  - delivery approaches and locations.
- Ensure college/institute partnerships with Indigenous communities are responsive to economic development and labour market needs by:
  - Fostering opportunities for community-college-industry engagement and joint projects; and
  - Supporting entrepreneurship and business development in Indigenous communities.
- Develop and share curriculum on governance of Indigenous communities and build a deeper knowledge, understanding and appreciation around self-governance and self-determination.
- Support Indigenous community sustainability by offering community-based programs that address industry and environmental concerns.





## Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### 1. How was the Indigenous Education Protocol developed?

- The Indigenous Education Protocol was developed by the Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) Indigenous Education Committee, comprising the following college and institute representatives:
  - Ken Tourand – Committee Chair, President, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
  - Angela Acott-Smith, Associate Vice-President, Student Development, New Brunswick Community College
  - Karen Barnes, President, Yukon College
  - Paula Burns, President & CEO, Lethbridge College
  - Eric Corneau, Nunatta Campus Dean, Nunavut Arctic College
  - Kim Fraser-Saddleback, Vice-President Academics & Student Services, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies
  - Diane Gauvin, Dean, Social Science and Business Technologies, Dawson College
  - Carolyn Hepburn, Director, Native Education, Sault College
  - Wayne Poirier, Vice-President, Student Services, Mohawk College
  - Larry Rosia, President & CEO, Saskatchewan Polytechnic
  - Brenda Small, Vice-President, Centre for Policy in Aboriginal Learning, Confederation College
  - Laureen Styles, Vice President, Academic, Justice Institute of British Columbia
  - Kory Wilson, Director, Aboriginal Education & Services, Vancouver Community College
- The Committee led consultations on how the Protocol should be developed and what should be included in the Protocol. These consultations took place at two CICan annual conferences (2013 and 2014), and at the Serving Indigenous Learners and Communities Symposium in December 2013.
- A draft of the Protocol was also shared with national Indigenous organizations: the Assembly of First Nations, the Métis National Council and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
- The CICan Board of Directors approved the Indigenous Education Protocol on September 26, 2014.
- CICan has developed the *Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes* to support members' commitment to improving and better serving Indigenous education. The spirit of the Protocol is to support colleges' and institutes' commitment to Indigenous education and provide a vision of how they can strive to improve and better serve Indigenous peoples.

## **2. How will the Protocol be launched and promoted?**

- The Protocol will be launched at the Serving Indigenous Learners and Communities Symposium in December 2014.
- CIGCan members are invited to participate in the signature ceremony at the Symposium.
- After the official launch, The Protocol will be available on the CIGCan website, along with the number and list of signatories.
- The Protocol will be shared with national Indigenous organizations and they will be invited to participate in the launch.

## **3. What is the timeline for signing the Protocol if my college/institute does not sign at the time of the launch?**

- Member institutions are encouraged to sign the Protocol however there is no set timeline.

## **4. What if our college/institute does not have all the structures, policies and programs in place for all seven principles?**

- The intent of the protocol is to be aspirational.
- Member institutions must assess their level of comfort with the principles and their commitment to serving Indigenous learners and communities. There is no requirement that all structures, policies and programs be in place upon signature.
- For colleges and institutes that may not be in a position to endorse and sign the Protocol at the time of the launch, CIGCan will facilitate the sharing of exemplary practices by structuring future CIGCan Indigenous symposia and streams at the CIGCan annual conference according to the seven principles of the Protocol.

## **5. For the seventh principle, what does it mean to “be accountable to Indigenous communities in support of self-determination”?**

- This is meant to reflect the strong relationships colleges and institutes have with all the communities they serve, and their role in supporting social and economic development. When institutions design and deliver community-based programming, they are being responsive and accountable to the needs of communities. The companion document, *Approaches and Exemplary Practices to Guide Implementation*, provides examples of how colleges and institutes can support self-determination of Indigenous communities including:
  - Formalize college and institute partnerships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, Indigenous institutes of higher learning and Indigenous organizations such as Friendship Centres and Métis Community Councils, recognizing the equal partnership status.
  - Identify community needs in an open and genuine consultative approach including:
    - how the community wants to work with the college/institute;
    - the content of the education and training programs; and
    - delivery approaches and locations.
  - Ensure college/institute partnerships with Indigenous communities are responsive to economic development and labour market needs by:
    - Fostering opportunities for community-college-industry engagement and joint projects; and

- Supporting entrepreneurship and business development in Indigenous communities.
- Develop and share curriculum on governance of Indigenous communities and build a deeper knowledge, understanding and appreciation around self-governance and self-determination.
- Support Indigenous community sustainability by offering programs in their communities that address industry and environmental concerns.

The right to self-determination is articulated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Articles 3, 4 and 5 as follows:

*Article 3*

*Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.*

*Article 4*

*Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.*

*Article 5*

*Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.<sup>1</sup>*

**6. What is the purpose of the document entitled “Approaches and Exemplary Practices to Guide Implementation”? Is it required that an institution have all these practices and approaches in place to sign on to the Protocol?**

- The exemplary practices are only suggestions and new exemplary practices will be added through workshops and sessions at the CICan Serving Indigenous Learners and Communities Symposium and annual conferences. For this reason, this is considered a living document that will be updated annually.
- The purpose of this document is to provide examples of how colleges and institutes can apply the principles at their institutions. The intent of the Protocol is to be aspirational. In recognition that colleges and institutes are organized and structured differently to meet the needs of Indigenous learners and communities, there is no requirement that institutions have all these practices in place in order to sign the Protocol.

**7. What is the purpose of the Institutional Partnerships Signature page? Are colleges and institutes required to have Indigenous partners co-sign?**

- It was recommended during consultations with CICan members that an Institutional Partnerships Signature page be included should institutions’ Indigenous community partners wish to co-sign the Protocol. There is no obligation to have Indigenous partners sign the Protocol. However, should be encouraged where possible as an act that can build or maintain positive relationships with Indigenous partners.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. October 2, 2007. Pg. 4.

- Colleges and institutes are encouraged to hold public signing ceremonies where local Indigenous partners and communities are invited to participate. CIGan would appreciate receiving copies of photos of public signing ceremonies that could be featured on the CIGan website.